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ABSTRACT

Suggesting that experiential learning exercises are potentially powerful means for promoting student learning, this paper explains an experiential learning model, offers guidelines to consider when utilizing experiential learning strategies in the classroom, and presents 15 experiential learning activities that can be used in teaching communication theories. The paper begins with a description of J. W. Pfeiffer and J. E. Jones' cycle of experiential learning--experiencing, publishing, processing, generalizing, and applying. Guidelines offered in the paper include: plan activities that meet the learning needs of students; have students share their reflections and observations in group discussions; and allow students ample time to process and reflect on the experience. The paper concludes with 15 step-by-step activities on the following topics: self-disclosure, power in relationships, nonverbal communication, constructivism, first impressions, conflict, perception, expression of emotions, active and reflective listening, internal and external rules in relationships, systems theory, implicit contracts, organizational values, and organizational structure. Contains 10 references. (RS)

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TEACHING COMMUNICATION THEORIES:

AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH

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TEACHING COMMUNICATION THEORIES: AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH

Tell me and I will forget.

Show me and I will remember.

Involve me and I will understand.

This Chinese proverb captures the essence of experiential learning, or learning by doing. Experiential learning approaches are those that primarily stress *active* participant involvement versus passive receptivity. Experiential learning occurs when a person engages in some activity, looks back on the activity critically, abstracts some useful insight from the analysis, and puts the result to work. It provides a framework in which the inductive process can be facilitated since it proceeds from observation rather than from a prior truth, as in deductive processes. The purpose of experiential learning is the application and integration of concepts and philosophies that students acquire in the traditional classroom experience (Medoff, 1993). The three major tenets of experiential education are (1) connecting theoretical knowledge to real life experiences; (2) valuing and fostering different ways of knowing, and (3) encouraging lifelong learning (Sellnow & Seekins, 1992).

Experiential exercises, as opposed to strictly lecture formats, are potentially powerful means for promoting student learning because learning is internalized more effectively. They are effective for enhancing cognitive, affective and behavioral learning because of their highly engaging nature. An ever-increasing body of literature points to a number of significant benefits such as increased student interest, improved motivation, enhanced learning and retention, improved interracial relations, and increased sensitivity to diversity issues, that accrue as a result of using experiential learning approaches. Using a repertoire of more varied, flexible teaching strategies appears to enrich the learning of all students, with particularly positive outcomes for diverse students who may possess a greater range of nontraditional learning styles and strengths (Halpern, 1994; Junn, 1994; Martinson, 1993; McCarthy, 1987; Pfeiffer & Jones, 1983).

This paper will focus on the utilization of experiential learning exercises in general and how they can be used to teach specific communication theories. As such, the paper will explain an experiential learning model and guidelines to consider when utilizing experiential learning strategies in the classroom. Numerous experiential learning exercises will be described that can be used in teaching communication theories.

In contemplating the use of experiential learning strategies, it is first advantageous to understand the cycle of experiential learning. Pfeiffer and Jones (1983) provide a theoretical framework from which to draw in integrating experiential learning strategies in the classroom.

An Experiential Learning Model

Experiential learning as described by Pfeiffer and Jones (1987) is a process, or cycle. This cycle consists of five steps: Experiencing, publishing, processing, generalizing, and applying. It seems prudent to examine each step more thoroughly to provide a conceptual foundation from which to proceed in utilizing experiential learning to teach communication theories.

The first step in the cycle is **experiencing**, or the actual "doing" part. This is the structured experience, the step most often associated with the games, or the fun part. The purpose of this stage is to develop a common data base for the discussion that follows. Whatever happens in the activity becomes the basis for critical analysis, and participants may learn serendipitously. These experiences provide the common references for group inquiry. Examples of individual and group activities include making products, creating art objects, writing skits, role-playing, simulations and games, transactions, problem solving, feedback, self-disclosure, fantasy, choosing, nonverbal communication, group discussion, writing, analysis of case material, bargaining, planning, competing, and confronting. Instructors are cautioned to be careful not to generate excess data or create an atmosphere that makes discussion of the results difficult. Of note, just because students DO the experience, doesn't mean they LEARN anything. As a result, this step is probably not as important as the next four steps. Hence, there needs to be

extensive follow-up in order to facilitate learning. This leads to the second step in the experiential learning cycle.

Publishing involves sharing reactions and observations about what happened within individuals, at both cognitive and affective levels while the activity was progressing. It is best to have this step structured, so students will stay more focused on what happened. This can be done through recording data during the experience to talk about later, using whips (quick free-association go-arounds on various topics concerning the activity), generating small group lists (what we saw/how we felt), posting on newsprint, and using go-arounds (systematic "interviewing" of individuals about their experience during the activity). Structured reporting methods make transition to the next phase easier.

Processing the experience is a systematic examination of commonly shared experiences by those involved in the experience. Known as the "group dynamics" phase of the cycle, it involves discussion of patterns and dynamics and is the pivotal step in experiential learning. This "talking-through" stage cannot be ignored or designed spontaneously if learning is to be developed. Examples of ways to process experience include process observers (reports, panel discussions), thematic discussion (looking for recurring topics), sentence completion (participation in this activity led to.....), questionnaires (writing individual responses to items developed for the exercise), and data analysis (studying trends and correlations from information generated during the publishing stage or identifying key terms and posting a list of dimensions - or key terms - to guide the discussion).

The next step, **generalizing**, involves abstracting ideas from the processing stage and inferring principles about the real world. In essence, it involves a leap from the reality inside the activity to the reality of everyday life or the basic premises of the communication theory upon which you are focusing. This inferential leap from the structured experience is what makes the structured experience practical and meaningful. Generalizing can be more effective if there is a group product because this furthers discussion which should further enhance internalization of ideas and concepts. Having students present

their generalizations visually as well as orally can facilitate vicarious learning among participants.

Strategies to promote generalizations from the processing stage include fantasy (guiding students to imagine realistic situations "back home"), guiding students to apply information to theoretical perspectives (writing statements about what is "true" about the "real world"), individual analysis ("what I learned," what I'm beginning to learn," What I re-learned"), and key terms (posting topics for potential generalizations, posting theoretical perspectives). In teaching communication theories and concepts, this provides an opportunity for the instructor to supplement and support generalizations with theoretical and research findings to augment student learning. This practice provides a framework for the learning that has been produced inductively and checks the reality orientation of the process.

The final step in the experiential learning cycle is **applying**, or planning more effective use of the learning. Internalizing or conceptualizing communication theories and applications to everyday life happens in this step. Generalizations are applied to actual situations in which students are involved, and to the communication theory being discussed. In the application stage, it is critical that attention be given to designing ways for students to use the learning generated through the experience to plan more effective behavior or more thoroughly understand theoretical assumptions. There are numerous ways to promote application. Using dyads or triads where students take turns helping each other with problem areas is effective. Another strategy is applying generalizations in small groups or interest groups, where students discuss specific generalizations in terms of what can be done more effectively, or how information and learning directly apply to theoretical perspectives. Ultimately, this step should promote interaction because students are more likely to apply information if they share it with others.

Utilizing the cycle of experiential learning can be especially helpful in teaching communication theory to undergraduates. Undergraduate students often do not understand the process of theory formation or the relationship between theory and empirical research. Students sometimes ask questions that indicate their confusion such as, "Is this a fact, or just a theory?" One of the benefits of experiential

learning in teaching communication theory is the ability to illustrate the process of theory formation, especially the process of forming inductive or grounded theory. The five step process involved in experiential learning encourages students to do something, then reflect on what they have done. Often during the steps of "processing" and "generalizing" students become aware of the "implicit" theories or assumptions that guided their behavior during the "experiencing" phase of the activity. If students are able to understand how their own implicit theories guide their behaviors and interpretations of others' behavior, they are better able to understand the power of a communication theory to explain aspects of everyday life. Students can also better understand how communication scholars develop theories that are tested empirically because they have participated, at least in an informal way, in the process of theory formation themselves.

Considerations and Guidelines in using Experiential Learning Exercises

While many students enjoy the engaging nature of experiential learning exercises, some considerations and guidelines are helpful to enhance the likelihood of a more purposeful, meaningful, learning experience for the instructor as well as the students.

First, assess the learning needs of your students, then plan activities that effectively meet those needs. It is also advantageous to consider maturity of the group, the learning environment, and skill and experience of the instructor (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1983).

Another consideration focuses on basic principles associated with group discussion. To stimulate thoughtful small or large group discussion, respond positively to all student efforts to participate, allow sufficient time for student response, watch classroom dynamics, reinforce, summarize, probe, and question minority and majority students in similar ways. It can also be effective to walk around the room, especially in the far corners and the back, when listening to student comments.

In utilizing written exercises where students interact with material and get their thinking on paper, have them share their reflections and observations in small or large group discussion. This is particularly

effective for reticent students. Free-writes on a question for discussion facilitate interaction, especially with students who are otherwise reluctant to speak in class.

Because experiential learning provides focused attention on the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of learning, it is essential to allow ample time for students to process and reflect on the experience itself. In some instances, the active component is given far more emphasis than the reflective aspect and students are not given ample opportunity to experience full reflection or abstract conceptualization. When this happens, the cycle of experiential learning is broken (Brookfield, 1991). One criticism students have is that exercises designed to enhance students' familiarity with content are often done so quickly that there is barely time to assimilate new ideas and knowledge, let alone to reflect on the experience. There is apparently little chance for students to interpret what they are being exposed to in terms of their past experiences or to trace connections between new ideas and perspectives and their already evolved structures of understanding. The period for mulling over that is reportedly needed for learners to make interpretive sense of what is happening to them is often neglected. Hence, it is important to allow ample time for students to report and reflect their feelings and findings as a result of their participation in the exercise.

Summary

Experiential learning can be a powerful way for students to learn communication theory in preparation for real-world experiences. Through integrating the experiential learning cycle in classroom activities, and following the guidelines previously suggested, the utilization of experiential strategies in the classroom can be a rewarding experience for the students and the instructor. The following exercises describe numerous strategies that can be utilized in teaching specific communication theories in the classroom.

Title: **To Tell or Not to Tell: An Exercise in Self Disclosure**

Theory: Altman & Taylor Social Penetration Model of Self Disclosure

Objectives: To give students practical experience in self disclosure
To have students determine general guidelines associated with self disclosure
To have students understand the impact their self disclosure will have on their relationships

Materials Needed: Paper and pencil for each student
(Variation: Flip chart paper and markers for each student)
Copy of the shield with designated information (see attached)

Time Required: 60 minutes (time can be shortened if students complete their shields as homework, and bring them to class completed rather than spending class time on creating the shield itself).

Description of Activity:

1. Read the following information to the students:

   Long ago in the days of knights in shining armor and damsels in distress, when boats were made of wood and people were made of steel, warriors would ride into battle shielded with a coat of arms. This coat of arms, or shield, was their protection against their enemy. It was a shield that acted as a barrier against other weapons. It was a shield that kept them alive.

   Today, I want you to make your own shield. This shield is a representation of who you are. Unlike the shields of days gone by, this shield will act as a way to bring people closer to us, and get to know us better, rather than act as a barrier.

2. Instruct students to create a shield including the following information. Keep in mind that NO WORDS can appear on the shield itself except for the student's name on top of the paper, and their motto (or descriptive words) on the bottom of the shield. (If it is to be graded, give students sufficient time to create their shields as a class assignment). Include the following information (or a variation of it). Students are to draw pictures representing the following areas: (see attached shield for clarification).

   A. The most significant thing that happened in the first half of your life.
   B. The most significant thing that happened in the second half of your life.
   C. The most significant thing in your life now.
   D. The most frustrating thing in your life now.
   E. An emotion that is difficult for you to express.
   F. If you were given two years to live, what would you do?

3. After students have completed their shields, form small groups (no more than 5) and have students share the information on their shields with the rest of the group. Each student should have an opportunity to explain their shields to the rest of their group members.

4. Have students respond to the following questions. Post answers for the entire class.

   A. What kind of information was shared in your group?
   B. How did you feel sharing the information on your own shield? Why?
   C. What observations did you make as other members of your group shared their experiences?
   D. What patterns in self disclosure did you notice as a result of this exercise?

5. Have each small group generate a list of guidelines or concepts associated with self disclosure based on their experience with the shield exercise. Concepts might include:

   We disclose when there is an acceptable risk
   Self disclosure is superficial at first, then moves to deeper levels
   Attitudes vary regarding appropriate self disclosure
   The level of self disclosure affects the relationship

6. Have each group share their list with the rest of the class. Encourage them to give specific examples from their experience to support their generalizations.

7. Conduct a class discussion on the Altman Taylor Social Penetration Model of Self Disclosure. Have students explore how this experience applies to the model. (This can be done in small groups if time permits, or as a large group discussion).

8. Have each group respond to the following (in written or oral format):
   A. How does the shield exercise apply directly to the Social Penetration Model?
   B. Through what you know about the Social Penetration model, and from what you experienced in this exercise, how can you behave more effectively when you are in a situation where you engage in self disclosure?

(FULL NAME)

The most significant thing that happened in the first half of your life

The most significant thing that happened in the second half of your live

The most significant thing in your life right now

The most frustrating thing in your life right now

An emotion that is difficult to express

If you had two years to live, what would you do?

Motto that has significant meaning to you
or
Three words that describe who you are

Title: **Power to the People**

Theory: Power in Relationships (a variation might be Aristotle's theory of persuasion with ethos, pathos, logos).

Objectives: To have students understand the different types of power and how they influence communication in everyday relationships

Materials Needed: Influential People Handout (see attached)

Time Required: 30 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Distribute the handout of influential people to each student. Ask each student to individually select the three most influential people on the list. If they choose to select someone not listed on the handout, that is acceptable. This can be done in class or assigned as homework. When assigned as homework, students have an opportunity to formulate more persuasive arguments for their choices, and as a result, less class time is spent on this part.

2. Separate students into groups of 5-6 people. Have the students discuss their choices in the group. After each student has had an opportunity to explain his/her choices, the group should discuss which people would be their top three choices as a group. Their task as a group is to determine the three most influential people, and report their findings to the rest of the class with a rationale as to why they made the selections they did.

3. Have each group write their top three choices on the chalkboard. (The choices the groups make are not really important, rather, it is the process they went through in order to determine the choices, as will be evidenced in the debriefing).

4. After a group representative has elaborated on the group's choices of the three most influential people, ask them to shift their focus to the PROCESS through which they made the choices.
   A. How did you feel in your group? Were you ever frustrated? Why?
   B. What did group members do to persuade you that their choices were better than yours?
   C. Why were you persuaded by some group members and not others?

5. Have each group generate a list of at 3-5 concepts or ideas related to interpersonal influence and power that were evidenced through participating in the exercise. Have each group report their findings to the class (via flipcharts or overheads).

6. Discuss how the concepts they identified directly apply to bases of power and interpersonal influence. At this point, a lecturette on legitimate, referent, expert, reward, and coercive power bases gives students a theoretical framework for understanding different influential stances.

   A. What types of power were used in your groups? Which were most effective? Least effective? Why?
   B. How can you use this information to be more effective communicators?

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Who's the most influential?

From this list, or other names, choose the three most influential persons who ever lived. Rank these in order, using 1 for the most influential. After you have made your decisions, construct an interpersonal persuasive strategy to convince other class members to accept your choices. Be prepared to argue your case in class.

1. Mohammed
2. Isaac Newton
3. Jesus Christ
4. Buddha
5. Confucius
6. Saint Paul
7. Tsai Lun
8. Christopher Columbus
9. Albert Einstein
10. Harriet Tubman
11. Karl Marx
12. Louis Pasteur
13. Galileo Galilei
14. Aristotle
15. Moses
16. Florence Nightingale
17. Martin Luther
18. Constantine the Great
19. George Washington
20. Orville & Wilbur Wright
21. Sigmund Freud
22. Alexander the Great
23. Joan of Arc
24. Susan B. Anthony
25. Michelangelo
26. Napolean Bonaparte
27. Adolph Hitler
28. William Shakespeare
29. Adam Smith
30. Thomas Edison
31. Plato
32. Ludwig van Beethoven
33. John Calvin
34. Saint Augustine
35. Gregor Mendel
36. Joseph Stalin
37. Rene Descartes
38. Julius Caesar
39. Eve
40. Queen Isabella I
41. Rene Descartes
42. Helen Keller
43. Genghis Khan
44. Martin Luther King
45. Nelson Mandela
46. John F. Kennedy
47. John Locke
48. Guglielmo Marconi
49. Asoka
50. Pope Urban II
51. Antoine Henri Becquerel
52. William Harvey
53. Max Planck
54. Joseph Lister
55. Wilma Rudolph
56. Rene Descartes
57. Francisco Pizarro
58. Hernando Cortes
59. William the Conquerer
60. Thomas Jefferson
61. Jean Jacques Rousseau
62. Edward Jenner
63. Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen
64. Lao-tzu
65. Enrico Fermi
66. Thomas Malthus
67. Voltaire
68. Gregory Pincus
69. Sui Wen Ti
70. Mani (Manes)
71. Vasco de Gama
72. Phyllis Schlafly
73. Cyrus the Great
74. Catherine the Great
75. Leonhard Euler
76. Mao Tse-tung
77. Zoroaster
78. Menes
79. Walt Disney
80. Peter the Great
81. Mencius
82. John Dalton
83. Homer
84. Queen Elizabeth
85. Justinian I
86. Johannes Kepler
87. Pablo Picasso
88. Mahavira
89. Neils Bohr
90. Johann Gutenberg
91. V.I. Lenin
92. Charles Darwin
93. Ghandi
94. Margaret Thatcher
95. Golda Meier
96. Euclid
97. Oral Roberts
98. Caroline Kennedy
99. Simon Bolivar
100. Cleopatra

Title: **Nonverbal Environment Tour**

Theory: Nonverbal Theories (Instructor choice-you can focus on one or many; see variations of summary guide on following pages).

Objectives: To increase student awareness of nonverbal communication in their everyday lives
To increase student awareness of messages being communicated via nonverbal channels

Materials Needed: Nonverbal Environment Tour Summary Sheet (optional)

Time Required: 90 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. The class period prior to the activity, tell students to wear comfortable shoes as they will be participating in a "field trip" of sorts on campus. Also, notify campus personnel that your students may be observing them so they are aware of what you are doing.

2. Divide students into groups of 6 or less. Give the groups approximately 4-5 areas of campus to visit where they will observe the nonverbal behaviors and the messages being communicated through those behaviors. (If time is a factor, a variation of this would be to have each group visit one area and observe for 10-15 minutes, then return to class rather than observing each area). Give each student a summary sheet and an extra one for the group to complete based on their observations.

3. Have students take their "nonverbal environment tour". Suggested places to go include the testing center, a faculty office (preferably yours - you'd be amazed at how much they find out about you based on this!), Union Building lounge area, library, classroom, cafeteria, and so forth. Students must complete the observation summary sheet as directed. I also like to have one sheet submitted for each group at the completion of the activity.

4. Give students a time to return (then plan on an extra 5-10 minutes for stragglers)!

5. Have each group share one example of nonverbal communication they observed on their tour, and the message it communicated. Be sure to highlight the power of nonverbal communication in acknowledging or discouraging certain groups of people on campus (physically challenged, Greek organizations, minority organizations, etc.).

6. Have each group write down five conclusions they can make about nonverbal communication based on the tour. Share these conclusions (via overhead or flipchart) with the rest of the class in a discussion about nonverbal communication in general.

7. Have each group write down one way in which this exercise will help them be more a more effective communicator in their own lives or suggest ways their campus could be more inclusive and acknowledging of diverse groups on campus. Write it on the back of the group summary sheet and turn it in.

Sample summary sheets for the activity are listed on the next two pages. Adapt them to meet your own needs and needs of your students.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

For each example observed within the aspects of nonverbal communication listed below, include the following information: (1) a description of the nonverbal behavior observed, and (2) the message being communicated by the behavior.

LOCATION_____

Kinesics: Examples of & messages conveyed through body orientation, posture, gestures, facial expression, eyes, etc.

Paralanguage: Examples of & messages conveyed through rate, pitch, volume, vocal quality, disfluencies, etc.

Touch: Examples of & messages conveyed through Heslin's categories of touch

Clothing: What messages did clothing convey as you observed? Include specific examples.

Proxemics: Examples of & messages conveyed through Hall's categories of interpersonal space and territoriality

Physical Environment: Examples of & messages conveyed through fixed, semi-fixed space, interior design, lighting, color, etc.

(This provides variations in the summary sheet. Utilize what works best for you and your students).

MARK KNAPP'S SIX PERCEPTUAL FEATURES

Formality:	stiff, impersonal vs. informal, relaxed
Warmth:	psychologically comfortable vs. uncomfortable
Privacy:	small, can converse vs. open, easily overheard
Familiarity:	well known, usual vs. novel, unusual
Constraint:	easy exit, temporary vs. confined, permanent
Distance:	close to others vs. far from others

EDWARD T. HALL'S ENVIRONMENTAL CATEGORIES

Dynamic:	changes as people change
Semifixed:	features that can be arranged, e.g. furniture
Fixed:	immovable, e.g. architecture

Perceptual Features:

Informal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Formal
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Comfortable
Open	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Private
Unusual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Usual
Temporary	1	2	4	4	5	6	7	Permanent
Others Close	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Others Far

Comments on:

Room Color:

Aesthetics:

Room size and shape:

Temperature and humidity:

Environmental structuring:

Other comments:

BASED ON THE NONVERBAL OBSERVATIONS YOU WITNESSED, WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN YOU DRAW ABOUT NONVERBAL ELEMENTS AND BEHAVIOR. (IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN)? !!!

Title: **Random Numbers Exercise**

Theory: Constructivism

Objectives: To introduce students to the concept of constructivism
To give students practical experience in organizing information so it is more meaningful to them

Materials Needed: Random numbers exercise handout (attached)
Pencils for each participant
Stopwatch (or clock with second hand)

Time Required: 10 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Distribute a copy of the "random numbers" handout (see next page) to each student. Instruct them to put the paper face down on their desk until you give them further directions.

2. Explain that there are numbers from 1-50 on the paper. When you tell them to turn the paper over, each student will circle as many numbers as they can, in sequential order, starting with number 1. They will be given 15 seconds to circle as many numbers as they can. Have the students get ready, GO! Time them for 15 seconds. At the end of 15 seconds, tell them to stop.

3. Ask students how many numbers they circled. Most of them get between 10-20 on this first attempt.

4. Now, tell the students to look more closely at the numbers on the sheet. Explain that the numbers generally follow a circular pattern going clockwise. Have the students turn the paper upside down again.

5. Students are now given 15 seconds to put an "X" over as many numbers as they can, in sequential order, starting with number 1. Students get ready, GO! Time them for 15 seconds again. At the end of 15 seconds, tell them to stop.

6. Ask students how many numbers upon which they put an "X". Most of them double or triple the number they got on the first attempt.

7. Conduct a class discussion with the following questions.
   - How did you feel the first time trying to circle the numbers?
   - How did you feel the second time?
   - How do you account for the difference?
   - Why do you suppose you were able to get so many more numbers the second time?

8. Introduce the theory of constructivism explaining that after we have selected stimuli from the environment, we make some sense of it. We don't simply collect perceptions and string them together randomly. Rather, we attempt to organize them in meaningful ways. Constructivism is a theory that explains how we organize experience.

   - How does the random numbers exercise relate to constructivism?
   - How does the information from the exercise directly apply to this theoretical perspective?

9. Continue with a more in-depth discussion of constructivism if desired.

Title: **Person Perception Exercise**

Theory: Cognitive Constructivism

Objective: To make students aware of the kinds of information they use when they form first impressions;
To illustrate different category schemes for organizing information about people.

Materials Needed: Name tags for each student.

Time Required: 20-25 minutes

1. Students wear a name tag and stand in a circle.

2. Students are instructed to look around the circle and select three people they perceive to be most similar to themselves. They write the names of the persons selected and also the reason(s) why they selected each one in their notebook.

3. Students pair up with someone whose name they wrote in their notebook. In some cases both students will have selected each other. In other cases, student A selected student B, but B did not select A. When there is an odd number, we create a threesome. The instructor should participate in this exercise, too.

4. After pairing up and sitting down by a partner, students make three predictions about their partner without talking to one another. Students guess the other person's favorite color, music, and hobby, activity, or sport. After making their predictions in writing, students share their guesses with the partner to see if they are accurate. They should also talk about the general first impressions they have of each other.

5. During debriefing discuss the kinds of information students use to make their predictions, and how their guesses about the other student illustrate steps in the process of perception. A discussion of the step of "organization" leads into a discussion of cognitive constructivism and the different category systems students used in the exercise.

Title: **The Great Orange Case**

Theory: Conflict (this exercise is a good introduction to conflict)

Objective: To enhance student understanding of the principles of conflict

Materials Needed: Orange Case Handouts (Case #1 and Case #2, see next page)

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Have students get in dyads. Tell them that in just a few moments, they will be involved in a role play situation where they are to assume the identity of the person described in the handout they will receive. They are to follow the instructions on the sheet, realizing that the other person interested in the oranges is the person they are paired with.

2. Give one person in the dyad the description of Case #1. Give the other person Case #2. Instruct students to read the cases to themselves and then begin negotiations. The ground rules for the activity are that the students can tell the other person anything that is on their description sheet, but they cannot let the other person read it. Instruct them to begin negotiations for the orange crop.

3. While students are negotiating, walk around and make note of some of the arguments being presented, persuasive strategies being used, and how the parties are attempting to resolve the conflict. Some of your observations can be included when you ask students how they resolved the situation.

4. If students are explicit about what they want, it should take them less than two minutes to complete the exercise (because one person needs the seeds and the other person needs the juice of the oranges). Yet, many students fail to make this distinction, and cannot reach an agreement. After a few groups have determined what to do, stop negotiations. Have those that are still negotiating explain what is happening at this point in their meeting. Ask them what they're thinking about doing. Then, have one dyad who has reached agreement state what they did. Most often, those students still negotiating have failed to communicate effectively, and as such, are engaged in quite a conflict (I've had threats of blackmail, bodily harm, and the like! Yes, it can get interesting)!

5. Have students discuss how they felt during negotiations. Compare and contrast responses by those groups that reached a decision and those that didn't.

6. Then, discuss the elements of conflict as they relate to the exercise.

   - an expressed struggle, disagreement
   - perceived incompatible goals, opposition
   - perceived scarce rewards
   - occurs between people who depend on each other (interdependency)

7. Discuss the following questions. This can be done in a large group, or the pairs can get into groups of four, and discuss each question and report their observations and ideas to the class.

   - Was this scenario a conflict situation? Why or why not?
   - Finish the following sentence: "As a result of this exercise, I learned that..."
   - How can you utilize what you learned when you experience conflict in your own relationships?

Case #1

You are the buyer for a large drug research corporation. This company is on the verge of a significant breakthrough in their search for a cure of colon cancer. In order to complete this very important research, you must procure the seeds of at least 1,000 albino mandarin oranges. The albino orange crop was frozen worldwide this year excepting Patagonia. Only 1,000 Patagonian albino oranges survived. It is imperative you procure the ENTIRE crop or this important research project will lose its funding. You have been authorized by your company to go to any lengths to secure the entire crop. There is one other person who is interested in the oranges. You are meeting with this person to try and reach an agreement so s/he will not interfere with your purchase of this crop and the important project this purchase will perpetuate. This research could continue for years, but your purchase will surely speed up the process.

Case #2

You are the buyer for a large fuel research corporation. This company is on the verge of a significant breakthrough in their search for an alternate fuel source to power automobiles. In order to complete this very important research and place this new fuel on the market by years end, you must procure the juice of at least 1,000 albino mandarin oranges. The albino orange crop was frozen worldwide this year excepting Patagonia. Only 1,000 Patagonian albino oranges survived. It is imperative you procure the entire crop or this important consumer project will lose its financial backing. You have been authorized by your company to go to any lengths to secure the ENTIRE crop. There is one other person who is interested in the oranges. You are meeting with this person to try and reach an agreement so s/he will not interfere with your purchase of this crop and the important project this purchase will perpetuate.

Title: **Poster Exercise on Perception**

Theory: Steps in the process of perception

Objective: To learn the steps in the process of perception and to illustrate the factors that influence perception.

Materials Needed: A poster or advertisement with a colorful, busy picture.

Time Required: 20 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Hang a poster on the chalkboard and give students one minute ask the students to write down everything they can see on the poster.

2. Students are then asked to write a one sentence answer to the question, "What is it?" While the typical perception exercises of the vase or the old woman/young woman allow for a limited number of responses, posters (especially if they are also an advertisement and/or a calendar) elicit a wide range of responses.

3. Ask a few students to read their lists to the class. Discuss the way people selectively attend to, organize, and interpret information differently. This activity also allows students to see, firsthand, the way factors such as age, experience, knowledge, likes/dislikes, eyesight, etc. influence perception.

Title: **Group Discussion on Emotions and Culture**

Theory: Emotions

Objective: To uncover taken-for-granted assumptions in our culture about expressing emotions.

Materials Needed: None

Time Required: 40-50 minutes including reporting out

Description of Activity:

1. Divide the class into four groups. Each group receives different discussion questions. The questions include:

   Group 1--What messages did you get as a child about expressing emotions?

   Group 2--What messages do men get about expressing emotions? What messages do women get? How are they similar and/or different?

   Group 3--Are there different rules for expressing emotions at home versus at work or school?

   Group 4--Do different cultures express emotions differently than we do in the U.S? (I give this question to a group that has students from other countries or that has students who have traveled abroad.)

2. After groups have had sufficient time to consider the question and develop a list of 4-5 insightful answers, ask them to report out to the class.

The activity allows for comparisons between cultures that are based on students own experiences. It also causes students to think about their implicit assumptions about expressing emotions.

Title: **Role Play Practice of Active and Reflective Listening**

Theory: Active and Reflective Listening

Objective: To practice using the skills of active and reflective listening. Students receive feedback from their peers and from the instructor about whether they are using the skills correctly.

Materials Needed: None

Time Required: 45 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Put students in groups of three. One student is the "speaker" who has a problem. The second student is the "listener" who is encouraged to use different listening techniques to help the "speaker" with the problem. The third student is an "observer" who is instructed to report out to the class examples of active and reflective listening.

2. Ask all the "speakers" to go out in the hall and give them their instructions. After they receive the instructions, send the "speakers" back in and ask them to send out the "listener," etc.

3. Instructions for Role Play #1: The "speaker" is a new student who has a lot of questions about college. The "listener" is a more experienced student who is instructed to help the new student. Both "speaker" and "listener" are asked to use active listening in their roles. The "observer" is asked to look for examples of active listening and also nonverbal matching.

4. When all students have received their instructions the role play can begin. Give students about 5-10 minutes to do the role play.

5. Ask observers to discuss examples of active listening and nonverbal matching.

6. After the first role play students change roles and receive a new set of instructions.

7. Instructions for Role Play #2: The "speaker" has just received a lucrative job offer in an undesirable location that would require a move. (Students create their own details about the job and location.) The "listener" plays the role of the "speaker's" close friend and confidant. Together they discuss the problem and try to help the "speaker" make a decision. The "observer" is instructed to look for examples of active and reflective listening and nonverbal matching.

Title: **Internal and External Rules in Relationships**

Theory: Knapp's theory on Stages of Relationship Development

Objective: To enable students to better understand the idea of external and internal rules and to think of examples that apply in their own lives.

Materials Needed: None

Time Required: 20-25 minutes for small groups; 20 minutes for debriefing

Description of Activity:

1. After a lecture on Knapp's theory and the concept of relational rules, divide the class into four groups and give each group a different question about "typical" internal and external rules in relationships.

   Group 1--What are the rules for acquaintances versus friends?

   Group 2--What are the rules that govern friendships between two women? What are the rules that govern friendships between two men? How are they similar and/or different?

   Group 3--What are the external rules that govern romantic relationships between men and women? How do these rules change over time as the relationship progresses?

   Group 4--What are the rules that govern friendships (as compared to romantic relationships) between men and women?

2. Ask groups to report out to the class. Discuss the difference between external and internal rules, how and when rules change in relationships, and how rules are related to intimacy.

   As students brainstorm ideas about the ways rules change in relationships, they also realize that these changes are instrumental in moving relationships from the experimenting to the intensifying stage.

Title: **Goldbergesque Designs** (from Instructor's Manual for Organizational Communication, 2nd ed. by Patrice Buzzanell and Gary Kreps, New York: Longman, 1990.)

Theory: Systems Theory

Objective: To illustrate concepts from systems theory such as interdependence, system openness, negentropy, environment, equifinality.

Materials Needed: Overhead projector, transparencies for each group, transparency pens.

Time required: Depends on size of class, approximately 50 minutes (can be spread over two class periods).

Description of Activity:

1. Explain to students the idea of a "Rube Goldberg" design. For example, a Rube Goldberg cartoon of frying an egg would feature the hen who lays the egg, dogs turning the mechanism which cracks the egg, balloons, mechanical arms, sundials, sinks, and any other conceivable and readily available device, person, animal, or inanimate object. The direction in which the process would occur is indicated by dotted lines and arrows. Once the process is set in motion, it continues on its own. Goldberg's designs typified his engineering background and his contempt for simplicity.

2. Put students in groups. Assign all of the groups the same problem (such as frying an egg in no less than 7 steps or placing a postage stamp on a business envelope), and three systems terms for discussion at the time their design is displayed.

3. A spokesperson from each group displays their drawings on the overhead and explain the systems concepts they are illustrating. Other students are encouraged to ask questions.

Title: **Perception Exercise to Illustrate Weick's Model** (from Instructor's Manual for Organizational Communication, 2nd ed. by Patrice Buzzanell and Gary Kreps, New York: Longman, 1990)

Theory: Weick's Model of Organizing, specifically the enactment-selection-retention model

Objective: To illustrate double interacts and the way assumptions guide our expectations and explanations.

Materials Needed: None

Time Required: 20-25 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. On the chalk board or overhead, write the following:

A EF HI

BCD G

2. Ask students to fill the rest of the alphabet in using some guiding principle which you will not reveal right away. Be careful not to say "find the pattern" because students will complain that you gave false directions. They interpret the word "pattern" to mean some sort of ration or numerical sequence.

3. When a student thinks s/he has the answer, ask them to write it on the board or overhead. Encourage students to ask questions.

4. Keep going until a student figures it out or until you decide to explain the pattern

5. The solution to the problem: the alphabet letters with curved lines are printed underneath and the letters with straight lines are printed on top.

6. Discuss how students engage in double interacts to solve the problem. Use Weick's definition of information, the ESR model and how the students use cycles and feedback loops to solve the problem.

Title: **Implicit Contracts Exercise** (from Instructor's manual for Kreps' text.)

Theory: Norm of Reciprocity and Implicit Contracts

Objective: To help students understand the concepts of "implicit contracts" and "reciprocity" and also to identify implicit assumptions they hold about relationships.

Materials Needed: None

Time Required: 25-30 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Ask students to write down the expectations they have for the behavior of their best friends, their spouses, their girlfriends/boyfriends, parents, or siblings. Ask them to assess how well these people are meeting their expectations. Assure students you will not be collecting these sheets.

2. Ask students to write down what they believe their targeted individuals expect from them. How well are you meeting their expectations?

3. Have students note on their sheet some areas in which they do not have well-defined expectations.

4. Ask students to highlight what their, and their target person's most important expectations are.

5. During the discussion ask students what their most important expectations are and remind them that you are not requesting relational details. Write these expectations on the board. You may want to categorize expectations in terms of traditional relational roles, expectations unique to the relationship, etc.

   Ask students how they would feel if their most important expectations were violated or broken. Discuss whether these expectations have been communicated to the other person, how they have been communicated, and/or why they have not been communicated.

Title: **Organizational Values** (from Instructor's Manual for Organizational Communication, 2nd ed. by Patrice Buzzanell and Gary Kreps, New York: Longman, 1990.)

Theory: Organizational Culture

Objective: To understand the concept of "organizational values" and how they are communicated

Materials Needed: Access to advertisements (outside class or in class)

Time Required: 30 minutes

Description of Activity:

1. Ask students to watch television, listen to the radio, or examine some retail store ads. (Usually done outside class, but you can also bring magazine or newspaper ads to class and do this step in class.)

2. Ask students to determine organizational values based on these ads. Discuss the ways organizations attempt to transmit their values and uniqueness to the public.

Title: **Examining Class Structure** (from Instructor's Manual for Organizational Communication, 2nd ed. by Patrice Buzzanell and Gary Kreps, New York: Longman, 1990.)

Theory: Structural-functionalism

Objective: To illustrate the concepts of organizational structure

Materials Needed: None

Time Required: 30 minutes

1. (It's best to do this activity toward the end of the quarter/semester.) Ask students to draw an organization chart illustrating the class structure and/or ask them to draw a network diagram illustrating class groups, liaisons, bridges, etc.

2. Ask students to identify the roles played by different classmates.

3. In the discussion that follows show how the concepts discussed in the chapter on organizational structure can be applied to informal organizations (such as your class) as well as formal organizations.

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